

LESSON 8

Primus inter pares.
The first among equals.

Key Words

premier
primate
prime

primeval
primordial

posterior
posterity
posthumous

Familiar Words

primary
prime minister
prime number
prime time
primer
primitive
primrose

Challenge Words

prima donna
prima facie
primal
prime meridian
primogeniture

PRIMUS <L. "first"

1. **premier** (prē'mē ər, prēm'ē ər, prī mîr')
adj. First in time or importance.

The winners of the Super Bowl are considered the **premier** football team in the nation.

n. A prime minister or head of state.

Golda Meir sought peace for Israel during her tenure as **premier**.

premiership, *n.*

NOTA BENE: Don't confuse *premier* with *premiere*, which derives from the same root but means either the first public performance of something ("... the American *premiere*) or the female star of a theatrical company (She is the *premiere* of the Bolshoi Ballet).

2. **primate** (prī'mīt, prī'māt)

n. 1. An archbishop or bishop who ranks highest among others.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is **primate** of England.

2. A member of the order of animals that includes monkeys, apes, and humans.

All **primates** have large-sized brains.

3. **prime** (prīm)

n. First in rank, excellence, quality, importance, or time.

People disagree about which stage represents the **prime** of life.

adj. Chief; most important.

Television networks schedule their best programs during **prime** time, when the greatest number of people are watching.

tr. v. To prepare something or someone for use or action.

The coach's pregame talk **primed** the team to play hard.

4. **primeval** (prī mē'vəl) [*aeuum* <L. "age"]
adj. Belonging to the first ages; ancient.

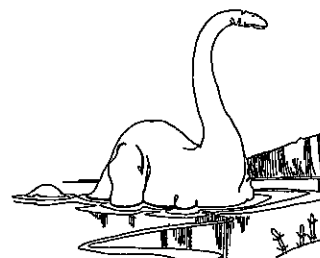
A **primeval** lake once covered most of California's San Joaquin Valley.

primevally, *adv.*

5. **primordial** (prī mōr'dē əl) [*ordiri* <L. "to begin"]
adj. Primeval; original; fundamental.

Human beings have a **primordial** instinct for survival.

primordially, *adv.*



Familiar Words

postgraduate
postscript
postwar

Challenge Words

postbellum
postdoctoral
postern
Postimpressionism
postlude
postmortem
postnatal

POST <L. "after"

6. **posterior** (pŏ stîr'ē ər, pō stîr ē ər)
adj. Situated behind or at the back.

Many automobiles in the 1920s and 1930s had a "rumble seat," an extra, **posterior** seat that opened out from what we now call the trunk.

n. The buttocks.

Controversy arose over the practice of spanking children on their **posteriors**.

posteriorly, *adv.*

Antonym: **anterior**

7. **posterity** (pŏ stēr'ə tē)
n. 1. Future generations.

Will our **posterity** inherit any wilderness lands at all?

2. A person's descendants.

The maker of this lace tablecloth would be glad to know that four generations of her **posterity** have continued to use it.

8. **posthumous** (pŏs'chōō mēs) [*humus* <L. "earth"]
adj. Occurring or continuing after death, especially a work published after the author's death or a child born after the father's death.

The Diary of Anne Frank, which recounts the young girl's experiences in the Holocaust, has brought Anne **posthumous** fame.

posthumously, *adv.*

NOTA BENE: You have been using *ante* and *post* most of your life, perhaps without knowing it. The abbreviations A.M. and P.M. to indicate times before and after noon stand for *ante meridiem*, "before noon," and *post meridiem*, "after noon."

EXERCISE 8A

Circle the letter of the best **SYNONYM** (the word or phrase most nearly the same as the word in bold-faced type).

1. a(n) **primordial** stage a. principal b. omnipotent c. monolithic
d. primeval e. developing
2. the **premier** athlete a. incipient b. prime c. vaunted d. famous
e. omnipresent
3. leave to **posterity** a. one's offspring b. one's own choice
c. chance d. the vanguard e. uncertainty

Circle the letter of the best **ANTONYM** (the word or phrase most nearly opposite the word in bold-faced type).

4. a(n) **prime** witness a. immature b. insignificant c. magnanimous
d. rare e. avant-garde
5. a(n) **primeval** event a. civilized b. irrational c. artistic
d. primordial e. contemporary
6. a(n) **posterior** position a. frontal b. squatting c. bilateral
d. upright e. courageous

